



As the new school year begins, we want to share the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) plans for next steps in our statewide student information system, AIM (Achievement in Montana). We hope that this information will help you in planning for submitting student data to the OPI.

In the past 18 months, the OPI has completed its initial implementation of AIM for K-12 education. Working with school districts and the state's vendor, Infinite Campus (IC), the initial implementation included the assignment of unique student identifiers to all 144,418 K-12 students enrolled in Montana public schools, registration of students for the statewide student assessment in grades 3-8 and grade 10, and reporting Adequate Yearly Progress for each school and school district using data extracted from AIM.

The following highlights some of the key developments for the 2007-2008 school year.

CONTRACT WITH INFINITE CAMPUS FOR THE AIM MONTANA EDITION

In June 2007, the Office of Public Instruction signed a contract with Infinite Campus for the purchase of the "Montana Edition" of the Infinite Campus software, which will be provided to all school districts at no cost. The AIM Montana Edition, formerly known as the Embedded Edition, is a local version of the state software and will be used by school districts to control access to student information within the school district. Authorized representatives of the district will establish access rights for school district staff as appropriate for each staff member's role in the district.

The AIM Montana Edition allows districts to manage student information locally that will synchronize to the AIM State Edition. Many features of the AIM Montana Edition, while useful to the local district, are above and beyond the scope of items required for data submission to the AIM State Edition. The OPI will only have access to the student data that is required at the state level. OPI will clearly indicate which data elements are required by the state in contrast to those that are optional for district use.

Depending on their individual needs, school districts can use the AIM Montana Edition in at least three ways.

- ◆ Many smaller districts may find that the AIM Montana Edition will provide sufficient school management software features to meet the district's local student information management needs.
- ◆ Districts that use school management software from another vendor may continue to use their existing system and upload required student information to the AIM Montana Edition for state reporting purposes. However, these districts will need to use the special education module in Montana Edition.
- ◆ Districts that have purchased the District Edition of the Infinite Campus software will synchronize with the AIM State Edition without the need to upload files. Infinite Campus will provide a discount of \$3 per student toward the purchase of the District Edition or toward a maintenance contract.



TRAINING

The OPI and IC will be providing training in multiple formats, including regionalized training and WebEx formats.

The first set of regionalized training will be on AIM and ADC during the week of September 24-28. AIM topics will include the collection schedule and submission timeframes, data element review, processes to submit data, an introduction to the AIM Montana Edition and time for questions. Registration information for the AIM and ADC trainings will be sent soon via Official E-mail.

The second set of regionalized training will be on the use of the AIM Montana Edition, provided by Infinite Campus, and will occur at multiple locations in each of the nine MASS regions from September through November. The number of participants from each school system will vary depending on the size of the system and are limited by the size of the labs and the concentration of the training. County superintendents are asked to participate and represent their multiple rural school districts. Districts will receive access to their version of the Montana Edition upon completion of the training.

A supplemental web site specific to the implementation of the AIM Montana Edition is being developed and will link from the OPI AIM web site. This site will contain detailed information regarding training locations, times, registration, role based training materials, contact information, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The OPI AIM staff has developed additional training materials including Montana specific AIM Quick Reference Guides and Data Collection Tutorials. These new guides will be available on the AIM web site, which is being re-designed to be more intuitive and user-friendly. The OPI intends to use the AIM web site as a key means of communication. Please check this site regularly for system updates, training schedules, and helpful hints.

Our plans for future product development include new system releases twice each school year, once at the start of the year and a second release, if necessary, at the beginning of the second semester. AIM product version 2008.2.3 will be available to schools on September 19 and will allow school systems to house their data in one database and to access the elementary and high school districts with one login. In December, the next version 2008.2.4 will include re-formatting of the file upload layouts to accommodate the addition of new data elements to be collected. This version will also include additional data validations, both in the file upload and user interface to ensure data integrity.



SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORTING AND IEP'S

The Montana Edition software includes a complete set of special education forms to be completed on line. This module of AIM:

- ◆ enables teachers and related service providers to electronically complete all special education documentation requirements
- ◆ provides useful tools for case management
- ◆ supports compliance monitoring
- ◆ automates most of the federally required data collections such as Child Count

Regional training for special education staff on the special education module will occur September 19 through November 16. The system will be available for use by special education teachers and related service providers following the regional trainings. Special education directors will be notified by e-mail of the dates of scheduled trainings in each region.

It will not be necessary to input existing special education documents such as a student's current IEP into AIM. However, plans include a requirement that all new documents prepared for the student beginning December 1, 2007 must be completed by using AIM.

The December 1, 2007 Child Count will be completed using the existing Citrix application. Contingent upon a successful rollout of the special education module and the outcome of data validation studies, the data for the December 1, 2008 Child Count will be automated through AIM and the separate data reporting using the Citrix application will no longer be necessary.

NON-PUBLIC ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

Non-public schools accredited by the Board of Public Education will need to submit student information through AIM beginning in 2007-2008. This includes information about enrollment, graduates, dropouts, gifted students, and Limited English Proficient students. OPI will be working with non-public accredited schools in the months ahead to assign unique identifiers to students. The reporting of student information through AIM by non-public accredited schools is necessary for evaluating a school's compliance with accreditation standards, tracking participation in federal education programs, and for registering students for the statewide student assessments. Non-public accredited schools will report through the AIM State Edition.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

The OPI will use the AIM system for collecting student data regarding enrollment counts, graduation and dropout counts, attendance, assessment registration, program participation, and career and technical education concentrators. The 2007-2008 AIM Student Data Collection Schedule is posted on the OPI Web site at:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/ITProjects/AIMSchedule.pdf>.



SCHOOL ADVISORY GROUP OF EDUCATORS - SAGE

About a year ago, OPI created an advisory group of school district representatives to make suggestions and give us feedback on the implementation of the AIM system. This team of twelve advisors represents a diverse set of school districts, large and small, east and west. They have advised OPI on enrollment practices, school management software, AIM data elements and collection schedules, impacts on school data management practices, and communication needs. OPI will continue to consult the members of SAGE as new components are developed and implemented in the year ahead.

REPORTING

OPI, in partnership with Infinite Campus, is working to develop a set of standard reports that school and OPI staff can use to review and report data. The first priority in developing these reports will be to help schools verify data submitted to AIM and to share enrollment count information with staff, school leaders and the public. The OPI will seek input from the members of SAGE on the development of these reports.

OPI has designed AIM to make it easier to report school data from the district to the state and from the state to the federal level. At the state level, OPI reviews district data for quality assurance and then aggregates the data for reporting to the US Department of Education. No student level data is submitted to the federal government.

AIM AND MAEFAIRS

For more than a decade, school districts have used the MAEFAIRS reporting system to report enrollment counts for the first Monday in October and February 1. In the 2007-2008 school year, OPI will run MAEFAIRS and AIM in parallel. Schools are asked to report enrollment in both systems. MAEFAIRS will collect the minimum enrollment information necessary to determine a school district's Average Number Belonging (ANB). AIM will be used to collect student enrollment, attendance on official count dates, aggregate hours, and student demographic information. Given that more than \$600 million in state monies are distributed annually based upon ANB counts, OPI believes that it is a "best practice" to use both systems for one more year before fully transitioning to the AIM system for enrollment reporting used in state ANB funding.

AIM AND ANNUAL DATA COLLECTION

OPI will continue to use the Annual Data Collection to collect data related to school personnel assignments, Indian Education for All, compliance with the accreditation standards, technology use, distance learning, personnel recruitment and retention, and test coordinator contact information. We will continue to collect home school and non-accredited private school enrollment through paper forms submitted to OPI by county superintendents.



Schools will report student information regarding graduates and dropouts through AIM. The graduation and dropout information will continue to be collected at the beginning of each school year for the previous year's data. Disaggregated enrollment, migrant, LEP, and gifted and talented student information will also be collected in AIM. The AIM student enrollment information will be used to generate the 2008-2009 state American Indian Achievement Gap Payment and for federal reporting including NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress calculations of test participation rates and attendance rates.

Schools that are using the District Edition of the Infinite Campus software will need to report school personnel assignments through the Annual Data Collection. The AIM State Edition is only set up to handle student information at this time.

AIMING TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS

As we strive for better communication with schools regarding OPI's data management efforts, we will be sending out a quarterly electronic newsletter with updates on the AIM student information system and other related developments. With one year of implementation behind us, we are making a concerted effort to better our planning horizons and communication of issues and timelines to schools.

In upcoming newsletters, we will provide more detailed information about regional trainings and WebEx conferences, reporting tools available in AIM, and uses of the data in OPI information systems. We will also share information about our planning process for expanding the AIM system in the years ahead to include school staffing information.

OPI has created an AIM Listserve to share information and updates about AIM collections. To subscribe to the listserv, click on <http://opi.mt.gov/ITProjects/AIM.html> and select "Subscribe to AIM Listserve."

Infinite Campus will host an "AIM Interchange" for April 9-10, 2008. This conference will provide an opportunity for school district users to learn more about AIM and the Infinite Campus software. We look forward to face-to-face conversations about how to improve AIM and meet the needs of school districts for information management and services.

K-12 EDUCATION DATA PARTNERSHIP

We appreciate the cooperation we have received from each and every one of our school districts. We also appreciate your feedback and suggestions for improvement. We realize how important our state-local partnership is to the success of Montana's data improvement efforts for K-12 education. On behalf of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch and all the staff at the Office of Public Instruction, we want to thank you for your partnership with OPI in our efforts to improve our K-12 information systems.

Please contact Sara Loewen, AIM Unit Manager, at 444-3494 or Nicole Weissman, Student Records Manager, at 444-3495 with your comments and concerns.